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ABSTRACT

Decentralization is the main feature of Danish governmental structures and the education and training system. The National Council on Educational and Vocational Guidance coordinates the career development field. Local and regional career development committees are organized under this judicial umbrella. Career education takes place as early as Grade 1 and continues throughout adulthood. The structures of the Danish adult education and training system are highly flexible and provide numerous options. Career development services are mostly publicly funded. Professionalization is one of the main current policy issues. To date, no attempt has been made to establish a professional accreditation process. There also is a need for better linkages among the numerous diverse services available. Key issues for the future, for both industry and educational settings, will be individual action planning; the economic outcomes of career development; and ecology of growth with the trends toward globalization. Three action steps must be considered for career counseling. First, the goal towards professionalism states that individual choices need to be facilitated by creative career development. Second, changes toward self-employment and how this affects counseling interventions need to be examined. Third, the shift in diversity in the population and how career counseling can respond should also be considered. (Contains 46 references.) (JDM)

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Career Development In Denmark

By

Peter Plant

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11. CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN DENMARK

Peter Plant, Royal Danish School of Educational Studies

Context

Decentralization is the main feature of Danish governmental structures and the education and training system. The National Council on Educational and Vocational Guidance (RUE) co-ordinates the career development field on a national level. Local and regional career development committees are organized under this judicial umbrella.

Structures

The Kingdom of Denmark (the Danish Commonwealth) consists of Denmark itself, Greenland and the Faroe Isles. The two latter are autonomous regions. Denmark, in turn, is divided into 14 counties and 275 municipalities. The state runs university-based career development services, the higher education info-centres (IVU, five in all), the vocational training centres (AMU) and the employment service (AF) which includes career info-centres and vocational guidance services. The counties run the adult education and high school career development services. The municipalities run youth guidance services, and integration services for immigrants and refugees. A multitude of private and foundation-based educational institutions is active in the field of career development, many with a mixture of private and public funding. Altogether, approximately 15,000 professionals, paraprofessionals and non-professionals work in career development, the majority on a part-time basis, with many combining teaching and career-development related tasks.

Points of Decision

Streaming in the educational system takes place at a very late stage compared to other countries (i.e., at the age of 15 or 16). Until then, students are kept together in one class, with the same classroom teacher for nine to 10 years in the primary/secondary school, known as the *folkeskole* (the people's school). Education is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 15/16. Preschool and a 10th school year are optional. There is a strong tradition for local self-government in the educational sector. Approximately 10 percent of pupils attend private, state-subsidized schools. Both public and private schools are comprehensive schools.

Careers education takes place from Grade 1 and is characterized by individual action plans right to the end of Grade 9 or 10. This is the key point of decision in terms of further youth education or training. Such decisions are largely based on the concept of free choice, with the limitations

that academic abilities or physical/mental handicaps may imply. Self-selection and choices made according to the present and local educational and vocational possibilities play a critical role at this pivotal point. But career choices are not irrevocable: a broad array of second- and third-chance options is available as demonstrated below.

At this key decision point (age 16) about 40 percent choose to attend *gymnasia*/HF courses (high schools, upper secondary). A similar proportion enters vocational education. There are some regional and even local variations. Only five percent do not take up any educational or vocational options at this stage. About 35,000 students (of a year-group of approximately 70,000) are admitted each year to higher education at universities, engineering colleges, business schools, teacher training colleges, etc. Some recurrent education is reflected in these figures.

Education and Training

Danish education and training structures can roughly be divided into the following areas:

- primary and lower secondary education (the *folkeskole*);
- general upper secondary education (*gymnasia*) and higher preparatory education (HF), higher technical education (HTX) or higher commercial education (HHX);
- vocational education and training, i.e., labour market training courses (AMU), apprenticeship/vocational education (EUD) and basic technical examination;
- further and higher education; and
- adult education.

Adult education in many different forms is an important feature of the Danish education system. The users are involved in the planning and organization of these activities, with the rights of free choice of topics and teachers, and free use of all public facilities (e.g., schools) when they are not occupied. Each year, about one million adults attend such evening schools. In periods of high unemployment, this plays an important role in activating people.

A specific Danish feature in adult education are the approximately 100 folk high schools (*folkehøjskoler*) — residential schools with no entrance or leaving examinations or certificates. Folk high schools are free to design their own curricula. They receive substantial state funding; the only condition for obtaining recognition is that the education provided must be of a general, all-round nature. Personal growth is what matters at these schools, not academic credentials. Courses last from one week to 10 months. Each year about 10,000 people attend such courses for five weeks or more. Another 40,000 attend short courses. There also are approximately 100 non-residential day folk high schools (*daghøjskoler*) with 13,000 yearly participants (mostly women, aged

20+) and another 100 production schools (*produktionsskoler*) for people aged 18 to 25, enrolling 5,000 yearly participants (60 percent female). Together, these provide further training and education opportunities for the unemployed. As of December 1998, the unemployment rate is 6.1 percent and dropping. It has been halved since 1994 (See <http://www.am.dk>.)

Vocational training centres (AMUs) are run by the state with notable influence from the trade unions and employers' associations. The AMUs offer work introduction courses, vocational training leading to a certificate for semi-skilled workers and further training of skilled workers, all with a training allowance. The annual number of participants represents five percent of the total Danish work force. However, participation is as high as 15 to 25 percent in some sectors.

In conclusion, the structures of the Danish adult education and training system are highly flexible, and provide numerous second- or even third-chance options. However, many people do not have the capacity or the social circumstances to take advantage of them. There is concern about the number of educational drop-outs which can be as high as 15 or 20 percent. Career development programs and career counselling are perceived as measures to limit the drop-out rate.

Current Situation

From a structural viewpoint, current career development services are extensive and, in many ways, cover the need for lifelong career development. In practical terms, resources are widespread to a degree where they are scattered, rather than forming a coherent organization. Users/clients have trouble finding the best or even alternative resources for their career development purposes. Many career development services are poorly "signposted" both physically and metaphorically. Moreover, those in career development have many other tasks to distract them from the core service: they are teachers or administrators alongside their career development responsibilities. Some are not trained specifically for their career development tasks.

The staffing of the different services consists mostly of part-time teachers. Consequently, most career development practitioners are qualified teachers. At higher education institutions, advisers have an academic background. Careers officers in the public employment service, on the other hand, come from diverse backgrounds. Some are former shop stewards; others are skilled workers, civil servants, social workers or teachers, or have a clerical background. Similarly, drop-out prevention schemes such as Open Youth Education (Fri Ungdomsuddannelse; no upper age limit) are serviced by counsellors (mostly teachers who may have only a four-day training

course). In addition, smaller career counselling units are found in probation offices and the armed forces. In nearly all cases, training of career development staff takes place alongside daily career counselling work, mostly through sectoral-based, short in-service training courses.

Preventive Counselling

Municipalities manage preventive counselling for individuals at risk of unemployment through the youth guidance scheme. For adults, counselling may take place in connection with closures of large companies, usually through the employment service and sometimes the unemployment insurance funds. In fewer cases, the company sets up its own temporary outplacement service as part of redundancy settlements. Few specialized private sector outplacement agencies have emerged. In contrast, some trade unions have introduced preventive careers counselling in the workplace by offering short courses on counselling and information skills to shop stewards (Plant, 1993a). Most other career development services are more reactive in their approach.

Staff Training

Training of career development staff takes place at various institutions. The Royal Danish School of Educational Studies is the main one, admitting 300 students yearly. The Open Education adult career counsellor program, a yearlong course, is the only pre-service career development course available. The remaining courses are of different lengths (30 to 500 hours) and quality. Most courses, except the extremely short ones, contain the following topics in varying degrees, blended with the daily tasks:

- individual and group counselling — methods and theories;
- the function, development and limitations of career development;
- career development materials — books, videos, games, computer programs/ICT;
- the national labour market — statistics and politics;
- transnational careers, especially in the EU and Scandinavia;
- the experience of working life (directly or indirectly);
- collaboration between the educational system and working life — industry, commerce; and
- co-operation among career counselling practitioners, locally and regionally, including developmental work, evaluation techniques and organizational skills.

It is possible to earn a master's degree in education with a career development specialization at the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies. Denmark has one doctoral program in this field. Thus, the academic underpinning for career development is scarce. The following brief historical overview provides a backdrop to the present state of affairs.

Historical Background

Danish career development services have evolved from a modest start during the 1880s into widespread initiatives across educational settings, the labour market and social welfare institutions, employment initiatives, trade unions and (a few) private agencies. (See Plant, 1996a for details.)

From 1930 to 1960, career counselling services were mainly based on psychometric testing, used primarily in the apprentice employment service. However, during the 1960s, the tests were heavily criticized and replaced by a more client-centred approach, inspired by Carl Rogers. Today, tests see minimal use, though private recruiters use them to some degree. Recently, constructivist approaches in career counselling have been introduced (Peavy, 1998).

In 1946, a government report recommended the establishment of a nation-wide vocational guidance service to help youth in getting "a firm foothold in society." Education and guidance (i.e., career development) were seen as one measure to curb anti-social and criminal attitudes resulting from unstable conditions during the German occupation. A bill passed by the Danish Parliament in 1953 stated that an individual's choice of careers should be free and that vocational guidance should not be compulsory. Revised educational and vocational guidance acts were passed in 1961, 1981 and 1996.

Over the years, educational institutions at all levels have integrated careers education into their curriculum. The result is that there are thousands working in the field of career development, most of them on a part-time basis, combining teaching and counselling/career development work. This approach, pioneered in the early 1950s, accounts for the paramount sectoralization of Danish career development services: 25 to 30 in all, in a small country with five million inhabitants. The 1996 *Act on Educational and Vocational Guidance* covers all career development activities in Denmark, irrespective of the institutional setting. This is a unique feature. It reflects a policy of seeing career development as a continuous process, along with a concern for ensuring that resources are used effectively. The Act emphasizes the importance of individual choice while keeping future employment prospects in mind. Most Danish guidance practitioners have adopted a non-directive approach. However, there is continuing societal pressure to fill the gaps in the labour market, minimize unemployment, create equal opportunities for men and women, and integrate refugees and immigrants. In response to these pressures, new guidelines are issued, new activities are introduced and new groups of career development practitioners are formed. The regulations are so numerous, that a handbook on rules has been issued to provide an overview for professionals (Plant, 1997a).

Thus, career development has moved from a focus on the relationship between the individual and society to "human resources" where human capital and the economic value of career development are assessed in more rigorous terms. This seems to be an international trend (e.g., Killeen et al., 1992).

Professional Resources

Career development services are almost entirely publicly funded, with the cost "hidden" in the budgets of each educational/social/employment institution. Most of the costs are wages. The counsellor–client ratio is only vaguely known because staffs do not maintain a strict record of the numbers of clients.

The hierarchical structures in this field are rather loose. Career development staff members, in most cases, work relatively independently of managers, head teachers, etc. The inspectors of the Ministry of Education may develop new materials or courses, and may suggest, evaluate, support and inspire, but they have no formal power over guidance staff in their local settings.

Similarly, the few guidance trainers are mostly experienced guidance practitioners who perform the training role on a part-time basis. Most often, no special training of trainers takes place, except in the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies (DLH), and at DEL (training careers advisers at vocational schools), where some trainers are academics, specializing in career development and in the training of career development staff.

Research and evaluation of career development activities are scattered. The European dimensions of career development and educational/vocational guidance have been pursued, in particular, by Plant (1990, 1993b, 1992-95).

Access

Most career development services in educational settings focus on the students or potential students. There are few outreach services. Services for adults are provided mainly at the public employment and unemployment insurance offices. Employer organizations play no direct role in providing career development services. Individual employers, however, often encourage employees to take continuing education, sometimes as part of a formal program to review the career options of each employee. In a number of cases, this takes place in collaboration with the trade unions, as part of job-and-training rotation schemes.

Voluntary organizations may play a more distinct role in the future, especially in relation to supporting the underprivileged. For example, the Centre for Voluntary Social Work, set up in the early 1990s, is helping to soften the barriers between paid employment and non-paid work. To illustrate, in a small village, young mothers on social benefit receive career

counselling as an integrated part of short courses on computer literacy (Plant, 1992).

Particular groups, such as refugees, are entitled to careers counselling during their integration period. Each municipality is responsible for this activity which is often problematic, as their limited knowledge of the Danish language limits their training, educational and job possibilities.

Current Policy Issues

Professionalization is one of the main policy issues in the career development field. To date, no attempt has been made to establish a professional accreditation process or certification procedures (Plant, 1996b). Further, only vague attempts have been made to establish quality assurance guidelines in career development. In addition, there is a need for better linkages among the numerous diverse services available. These issues are discussed below.

Quality Assurance and Evaluation

Historically, there has been an interest in Denmark in measuring career counselling from various perspectives. In recent years, quality assurance evaluations of the public sector have been more numerous. For example, a regional public employment service (AF, Ringkøbing Amt) has obtained an ISO 9000 certificate. Further, evaluation centres were created for higher and primary/secondary education in 1992 and 1999 respectively. A study on the quality of careers guidance and counselling (Undervisningsministeriet, 1992) listed a number of quality indicators:

- client centredness;
- accessibility, transparency and coherence of the services;
- well-trained counselling staff;
- valid, precise and comprehensive careers information;
- referral to other counselling specialists; and
- follow-up.

This list was expanded in more recent policy papers (RUE, 1998, 1999), where issues such as the value and quality of cross-sectoral linkages were added. In these reports, quality issues were linked with ethical considerations, thus incorporating the Danish Ethical Guidelines for Educational and Vocational Guidance (RUE, 1995) as a foundation for quality in guidance. The extent to which such guidelines are put to use is not known. No evaluations of the impact of quality or ethical guidelines have taken place, as yet.

Broad public evaluations have dealt with issues such as user satisfaction. The Ministry of Finance evaluated 19 major public services. The overall

picture was that people were most satisfied with the public libraries, dentists and kindergartens. At the other end of the scale, social welfare offices and the public employment service were regarded most negatively (Administrations-og personaledepartementet, 1993). Whether users based their judgments on the (in)ability of the employment service to solve unemployment problems or the elements of counselling and career development, was not clear. In any case, such judgments are alarming.

There seems to be no direct link between unemployment and the perceived quality of life. A recent study of 10,000 persons (Ventegodt, 1994) concluded that, in Danish society with its relatively high level of social security, the quality of life seems to be linked with the actual type of activities people pursued, rather than with employment itself. The implications for career development services are that broader issues other than mere placement and job creation must be addressed in the process.

Clearly, there are more questions than answers in terms of establishing rigorous quality measures. In terms of improving the quality of the training of career development staff, few attempts have been made to introduce new delivery modes (e.g., distance learning). No organized supervision takes place on a continuous basis. No organizations monitor the quality of training in any Danish career guidance and counselling training institution (Plant, 1998b).

Linkages

In response to a somewhat fractured and incoherent career development service, a number of linkages have been established.

The common underlying aims of linkages are to make the most effective use of available guidance resources, improve client access to help, display greater transparency for users and create better coherence among the different services. Most services, however, scarcely go beyond the level of communication (i.e., sufficient understanding so clients can be cross-referred, but no actual co-ordination/exchanging of services). This is a prevailing policy concern, due to overlapping services and the possible loss of resources.

From the mid-1990s, emphasis on career development for unemployed adults has been evident. One-stop centres, known as *vejledningshuse* or counselling houses were introduced in which different career counsellors work alongside each other (AMS, 1994). Their goal was to make counselling and career development visible, easy to access, coherent, transparent and flexible. At one-stop centres, career development activities are diversified to meet the needs of different types of users:

- information and some counselling on training and educational options and alternative job opportunities;

- training and improvement of job-search skills; and
- information for employers on the labour market and on the different wage-subsidy and training schemes.

A number of basic principles are applied in these settings:

- Counselling must respect each individual and her/his personal needs.
- Counselling must be independent of particular interests (i.e., free of narrow and short-sighted institutional goals).
- Counselling should not be linked with control mechanisms.
- Counselling should be locally based, open for all and easy to access.
- Counselling should aim at improving opportunity awareness.
- Counselling is a process that might last from one short intervention to a chain of coherent information and counselling offers.

By 1997, 15 one-stop centres were in operation in nine of the 14 counties. A few evaluations of particular centres had been completed; however, no nation-wide evaluation has taken place. The overall impression is that while the need for such one-stop centres is evident, the diversity of approaches is problematic (RUE, 1997). There is no common labelling and, in practical terms, little shared synergy.

Co-ordination is maintained among career development services in Denmark in the sense that they are covered by the same legislation, co-ordinated by RUE. Regional committees, known as VFU (vejledningsfaglige udvalg) are established in the 14 counties, along with local committees in a number of the 275 municipalities. The VFUs have established bilateral and multilateral lines of co-ordination on guidance programs, exhibitions, work-experience schemes and exchange of information on clients. They also offer local and regional training courses and publish regional information, posters on counselling events and booklets on counselling services. For example, in Frederiksborg County, north of Copenhagen, most of the 600+ career counsellors are teachers and part-time counsellors, from social welfare offices, municipal employment units, the armed forces and probation offices. All are served by the regional career counselling committee, VFU. On a yearly basis, about 500 counsellors take part in some joint activity, ranging from seminars on ethics, to new ways to enhance youth career counselling. Moreover, a two-year, part-time training course for adult counsellors in the region has been established. Every second week, a two-hour information session brings counsellors up to date concerning

topical issues. The underlying philosophy is that common training forms the basis for co-operation and co-ordination at local and regional levels. There is some evidence of joint structures where different career counsellors work together. In one example, municipal counselling and employment staff joined with the local employment office staff, on the same premises, often working with each others' clients. Individual counselling is offered jointly by counsellors based in the public employment service and the municipality's employment unit. From the client's point of view, the service is integrated.

The social partners play a powerful role in the regional labour market councils (RARs), which are paralleled by a national structure, known as Landsarbejdsrådet (LAR). The RARs have the power to allocate resources to special target groups, including the long-term unemployed, and to establish new training options in the region. This role strongly involves regional social partners as responsible decision makers concerning the regional labour market and training options. Trade unions are members of the RARs, along with other social partners, and they administer unemployment benefits, two thirds of which are provided by the state through taxes. This is a particular Danish feature.

A focus in recent years has been on establishing joint multidisciplinary bases of career counselling. This is a specific Danish feature, but it holds messages for other countries as well: counselling services that are to co-operate should be designed, from the outset, to take part in a co-ordinated effort. Generally, too many resources are tied up patching poorly linked services and forming networks among the counselling services established independently. This means linkages, in spite of good will on all sides, are sometimes hampered by the different working conditions of counsellors, differences in counselling goals and various degrees of professionalism within a highly decentralized structure.

Professionalization

Finally, a major policy concern is how to raise the level of professionalism in Danish career development services. Criticism has repeatedly been levied at different career counselling services for being ineffective, invisible and incompetent (Mehlbye, 1996). At present, up to 50 percent of staff members in some sectors do not have even basic career development training. The reluctance to grapple with this issue has to do with the notion that no specialists are really needed. The thinking is that it suffices for teachers to add on a (short) career development course. The flaw in this argument is that teachers may or may not be good counsellors, but this does not make them professional career counsellors. Thus, recent plans from the Ministry of Education have included discussions to elevate the training of career counsellors to a bachelor-level degree, introducing a common and compulsory basic training module for all career counsellors, and putting

career counsellors more into their expert role. Such plans are radical in the Danish context. With the introduction of an academic degree in career development and counselling at the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies (in 1997), the way seems open for further professionalization.

Key Issues for the Future

Individualism

Both in industry and educational settings, individual action planning is essential. One example from Denmark, illustrates this point.

Fri Ungdomsuddannelse (FUU, Open Youth Education) was launched in the mid-1990s based on finding that the risk of long-term unemployment was four times higher for those without educational qualifications. A report to Parliament on educational drop-outs recommended that the training/education completion rate be increased to 90 to 95 percent in the 1990s. This goal has almost been reached. The remedies included (Denmark, 1994):

- more preventive counselling in terms of early interventions;
- continuing training and education;
- better transition from school to post-compulsory education;
- improved credit transfer possibilities across different educational sectors; and
- individually tailored training/education programs with personal follow-up counselling.

An individualistic approach is the focal point for initiatives such as FUU, a drop-out scheme with no age limit. Participants range in age from 16 to 60+ years with an average age of 21. A central component is a two- to three-year individual learning program. Such plans may contain several separate but consistent parts, including training or education modules, personal projects, work experiences in Denmark or abroad, with study grants attached. Each part must relate to the overall educational theme. FUU is a massive success, with 7,000 people engaged in the program, more than twice the estimated figure. One lesson from this approach is that more individualistic educational strategies will require parallel career counselling approaches. Another relates to the importance of career development services in individual lifelong learning and competency-based approaches.

Economic Outcomes of Career Development and Counselling

In recent years, a growing interest has developed in the relationship among the social, educational, vocational and economic goals of career counselling. The effects and effectiveness of counselling have been studied, along with the cost-benefit ratio and the quality of career development and counselling

activities. Few attempts, however, have been made to measure, specifically, its economic outcomes.

A deep interest is emerging among professionals with regards to the basic values of career counselling. Ethical guidelines have been established, issued by the National Council of Educational and Vocational Guidance, (RUE, 1995). As a result, new tools for evaluating counselling may emerge to supplement the economic angle. For example, ethical accounting could be used in describing the outcomes of career counselling. Ethical accounting is used in some Danish companies and educational institutions as a method of describing values, goals and achievements. The economic yardstick is one dimensional; however, counselling is a multi-dimensional intervention and needs to be evaluated in a multi-dimensional manner (Plant, 1993c).

One economic aspect of career development that is rarely mentioned in international literature is the informal economy. In Denmark, the informal economy represents the equivalent of 100,000 full-time jobs, not counting do-it-yourself and helping friends (Mogensen, 1986). Most activities in the informal economy are in construction (30 percent of all informal economy work), with domestic help, including cleaning and cooking, accounting for another 20 percent. Lawyers and accountants represent six percent. More men than women are active in the informal economy, although the growth rate among females surpasses that of men (Schmidt, 1990). High taxation levels (more than 50 percent on some incomes) stimulate the informal economy, it has been argued, and deter some individuals from working in the formal economy. When this is combined with the relatively high levels of income compensation in the welfare system leads some to ask: Does it pay to work? Research has shown that it does not pay to work in all cases (Mogensen, 1993). Yet, Denmark has one of the world's highest employment participation rates. This leads to the conclusion that people work for a variety of reasons, only one of which is the economic incentive.
In an attempt to support the exchange of skills in the informal economy, grass-root organizations are establishing a network of bartering known as LETS (Local Exchange Trade System). The inspiration comes from Canada; 500 such local bartering circles are known to be in operation worldwide (Hansen, 1994). With LETS, the direct links are broken in favour of a more fluid connection, where taxation has no place and where even small jobs may fit in (e.g., one person "pays" for a full body massage in return for having eight shirts ironed). From a fiscal point of view, this is a disaster. From a job-creation perspective, this approach may represent a possible way forward for some marginalized individuals under harsh conditions. Career counselling, in its official capacity, will find it difficult to support such bartering strategies. Nonetheless, new ways to work are constantly being organized, in the informal economy, whether they are ignored or not.

Ecology

Clearly, career development activities are linked with the trend toward globalization. Career development may facilitate mobility. This is important from an economic growth perspective. One purpose of the single European market is to increase personal mobility within the European Union. Mobility, however, has two sides. It may improve the quality of life for the mobile but, in the process, leave the immobile behind in poorer conditions. Mobility and transnational career options are, primarily, for the skilled and those with intercultural competencies and language abilities. There seems to be a growing recognition that mobility tends to leave the socially and geographically immobile, including a large proportion of the unemployed, behind in poorer conditions (Pickup, 1990). In manpower-exporting areas, the loss of dynamic individuals may add to the cultural downward spiral.

In the globalization picture, career counselling is a vehicle for economic growth. However, the analysis of cost-benefit ratios falls far behind a number of important issues (e.g., care for the underprivileged or environmental concerns). Such issues are simply not on the economic agenda. As a counter-reaction, the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), along with a number of national career development organizations, has adopted a statement on global ethical standards, which focusses on important humanistic values and includes a recognition of the tensions between economic growth and environmental issues (IAEVG, 1995). New concepts are under way to challenge the paradigm of economic growth. This calls for the concept of green career development (Plant, 1995b).

At the heart of green career development is recognition of the need to make sustainable career choices that take into account global environmental problems such as pollution, overconsumption, the pressure on scarce water resources, fishing and ozone holes. A change is needed. Consider the implications of gross national product as an economic concept. It includes everything, making no qualitative distinctions. More traffic and more accidents are lumped with more care for the elderly and better wastewater treatment. This one-dimensional approach makes little sense ecologically. This is acknowledged by some economic commentators. For example, the World Bank in a 1995 report revised its list of the 10 richest countries of the world. Australia came out number one and Canada number two. Why? Because the World Bank's list was based on a new mix of wealth indicators including human resources, produced assets and natural resources (World Bank, 1995), as opposed to the traditional gross national product indicator.

Economists now seem to be aware of the clash between economic growth and environmental concern. The Worldwatch Institute (USA), for example, in its 1995 report, stated that economic growth is at the point of no longer

being environmentally sustainable (Worldwatch Institute, 1995). Whereas economic growth used to be the solution, it is now seen to create as many problems as it solves. Jobless growth and a deterioration of natural resources presents a predicament. In this situation, career counselling must become part of the solution. The following list is by no means exhaustive, but points to some of the necessary considerations:

- Career counselling should take into account and create awareness of the environmental impact of vocational choices.

- Career development services should play a proactive role in establishing training and education opportunities with a positive contribution in environmental terms.

- Career development should be measured by an economic yardstick *and* by ethical accounting (Plant, 1994), for example, by relating environmental goals to the actual performance in terms of counselling activities.

- Career development services themselves should look at their own practice. How green are routines in the office/school in terms of recycling waste, cutting down on power consumption, etc?

How counsellors address these concepts will differ from culture to culture. There is no escape, however, from the "culture of reflexivity" (Giddens, 1991), where we are forced to reflect continuously on the consequences of our choices. Career counsellors need to be more comfortable encouraging people to ask: What might be the environmental impact of your career choice? At its best, green career development could be proactive, questioning, probing, reflexive and client-centred. Environmental issues and concerns know no boundaries.

Action Steps

Professional

Individual, constantly renegotiated choices and changes need to be facilitated by creative and flexible career development and counselling services. Most system-oriented services are not prepared for this challenge. Responses demand shifts of well-established routines and even paradigms. In the Danish career counselling culture, such changes are gradual, rather than abrupt.

The career counsellor is the crucial resource around which career counselling services revolve (Andreasen et al, 1997). Students want individual career counselling by a committed career counselling expert rather than general lectures by their form teacher. For them, the good

counsellor is a person with comprehensive knowledge on educational and training possibilities — a person they can trust, who takes an interest in them personally. Taking this into account, the development of a higher level of professionalism will be needed.

Portfolio and Self-Employed

It is often unclear to counsellors in established, educationally based career counselling units, what portfolio work and self-employment concepts might imply in terms of counselling interventions. As a response, new counselling services are emerging. The Danish Association for Entrepreneurship (Dansk Iværksætterforening) offers a counselling package on self-employment (written materials and telephone counselling) to its members. Most counsellors see themselves as wage earners as opposed to entrepreneurs (Plant, 1997c) and, thus, may consciously or not, reflect such attitudes in their counselling activities. In broad terms, counsellors are aware of developments in the labour market, but typically only sporadic updating takes place pertaining to most counsellors' knowledge of labour market issues.

Diversity and Coherence

Career counselling is abundant in Denmark but seems to have difficulty responding to current labour market conditions. From a user point of view, the picture has become complicated in terms of the lack of transparency and coherence of counselling services. What is needed is greater clarity and coherence. In light of this, the following recommendations seem appropriate:

- The professional training of counsellors should be intensified, preferably in a cross-sectoral context in order to establish future linkages.

- Counselling services should be clearly identified to the client, both literally and metaphorically.

- Counselling services should work together where possible to pool expertise to the benefit of clients, for example in multidisciplinary counselling centres.

- Counselling should be proactive rather than reactive. Outreach counselling, for example, in a targeted effort is effective in intercepting needs and creating new initiatives.

- Counselling should support local initiatives in an active backup role, for example through better links between local training efforts and (green) job creation.

Career counselling seems oddly absent from most of the areas which could be broadly labelled as "new ways to work" in the "boundaryless career" (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). Little cross-sectoral co-operation takes place, and most of these counsellors are not trained in counselling skills, but rather in giving technical, legal and financial advice. These services focus almost exclusively on the economic and managerial aspects of, for example, setting up small-scale enterprises. Personal, vocational and educational career development and counselling are rarely included.

Counselling could play a more pointed role in relation to new ways to work. The following recommendations seem appropriate:

- Counselling should be linked more closely to the concept of new ways to work in, for example, local job creation efforts.

- Counselling should play a more targeted role in job creation, linking social and sustainable economic development. This means the different counselling services across sectors should keep in closer contact with the social partners in the local area.

- In the process of widening concepts of work, counselling should move into new areas such as environmentally concerned job creation and volunteer work.

In addition, counselling often has other aims. It is a *learning process*, raising the client's self-awareness and opportunity awareness, and enhancing client skills in making decisions and coping with *frequent change*. Career counselling cannot solve problems such as unemployment or sustainable development, but has an important role to play as a facilitator between the personal aspirations and goals of individuals and the labour market, and environmental needs of society. The personal action-planning component of career counselling is part of a trend linked with rapid changes in society: social mobility necessitates a clear definition of personal skills and competencies. Societal tectonic plates are moving: "careerquakes" are the order of the day (Watts, 1996). In labour market terms, flexibility is a key concept. This is reflected in education and training. Modular courses, open learning, credit accumulation and transfer, all reflect this trend. Personal action planning is the counselling part of this process. It is designed to empower the individual, as well as being part of the negotiation process between individual and societal interests.

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